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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2017

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/72/420/Add.10)*]

72/225. Combating sand and dust storms

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Recalling its resolutions 70/195 of 22 December 2015 and 71/219 of 21 December 2016 on combating sand and dust storms,

Reaffirming its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Welcoming the Paris Agreement[1] and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[2] that have not yet done so to deposit their

[1] Adopted under the UNFCCC in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.
[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

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instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Recalling United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/7 of 27 June 2014 on strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting air quality,[3]

Noting the adoption, by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-second session, of resolution 72/7 of 19 May 2016 on regional cooperation to combat sand and dust storms in Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012, in which it endorsed the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",

Recalling also its resolution 71/229 of 21 December 2016 on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

Taking note of the Regional Programme to Combat Sand and Dust Storms of the United Nations Environment Programme, and taking note also of other initiatives, including the ministerial meeting on sand and dust storms held in Nairobi on 21 February 2013 on the margins of the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Recalling the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/283 of 3 June 2015, and recognizing that one of the priorities for action of the Framework is an understanding of disaster risk for prevention and mitigation and for the development and implementation of appropriate preparedness and effective response to disasters, which continue to undermine efforts to achieve sustainable development,

Acknowledging that, based on the notion of hazards as defined in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[4] addressing multidimensional hazards, including those posed by sand and dust storms, contributes towards the achievement of the goals, targets and priorities for action set out in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,

Emphasizing the relevance of the efforts and cooperation of Member States at the regional and international levels to control and reduce the negative impacts of sand and dust storms on human settlements in vulnerable regions, taking note of the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in hosting a regional meeting of environment ministers in Tehran on 29 September 2010, welcoming the holding of other meetings with the active participation of all countries, and taking note with appreciation of other ongoing initiatives by various countries to combat sand and dust storms, especially at the regional level,

Stressing the need for cooperation at the global and regional levels with a view to managing and mitigating the effects of sand and dust storms through the enhancement of early warning systems and the sharing of climate and weather

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[3] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/69/25), annex.

[4] A/CONF.206/6 and A/CONF.206/6/Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

information to forecast sand and dust storms, and affirming that resilient action to combat sand and dust storms requires a better understanding of the severe multidimensional impacts of sand and dust storms, including the deterioration of the health, well-being and livelihood of people, increased desertification and land degradation, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and land productivity, and their impact on sustainable economic growth,

1. *Recognizes* that sand and dust storms and the unsustainable land management practices, among other factors, that can cause or exacerbate these phenomena, including climate change, pose a serious challenge to the sustainable development of affected countries and regions, also recognizes that, in the past few years, sand and dust storms have inflicted substantial economic, social and environmental damage on the inhabitants of the world's arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas, especially in Africa and Asia, and underscores the need to treat them and to promptly take measures to address those challenges;

2. *Recalls* its decision to convene a high-level interactive dialogue during its seventy-second session, to discuss action-oriented recommendations to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of the affected countries, including ways to improve policy coordination at the global level to address those challenges in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, and invites Member States, entities of the United Nations system, including regional commissions, and other relevant stakeholders to participate actively in the high-level interactive dialogue;

3. *Acknowledges* the role of the United Nations development system in advancing international cooperation and support to combat sand and dust storms, and invites all relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and all other related organizations to integrate, in their respective cooperation frameworks, operational programmes, measures and actions aimed at combating sand and dust storms so as to address this problem and contribute to the enhancement of, inter alia, capacity-building at the national level, the implementation of regional and subregional projects, the sharing of information, best practices and experiences and the boosting of technical cooperation in the affected countries and countries of origin, to improve the implementation of sustainable land management practices, to take measures to prevent and control the main factors of sand and dust storms and to improve the development of early warning systems as tools to combat sand and dust storms in accordance with their strategic plans;

4. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to consider initiating an inter-agency process involving relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and existing resources, and taking into account United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/21 of 27 May 2016[5] and other relevant resolutions and decisions, to prepare a global response to sand and dust storms, including a situation analysis, a strategy and an action plan, which could result in the development of a United Nations system-wide approach to addressing sand and dust storms and which can be used as an inter-agency framework for medium- or long-term cooperation and division of labour;

[5] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/71/25), annex.

5. *Recognizes* the importance of new and innovative technologies and best practices in combating sand and dust storms, as well as their sharing and transfer on mutually agreed terms;

6. *Encourages* regional, subregional and interregional organizations and processes to continue to share best practices, experiences and technical expertise in combating sand and dust storms to address the root causes and impacts of sand and dust storms, including through improved implementation of sustainable land and management practices, and to promote regional cooperation in this matter to reduce the risks and impact of future sand and dust storms and to provide affected countries with capacity-building and technical support from the relevant United Nations organizations, such as the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization, within their respective mandates, to this end;

7. *Invites* all affected Member States as well as relevant entities of the United Nations development system, regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to endeavour to meet the objectives set out in the present resolution;

8. *Reaffirms* that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and, among other factors, is a serious challenge to the sustainable development of all countries, including those affected by sand and dust storms, and emphasizes that, among other factors, climate change is an important potential contributor to future wind erosion and the risk of sand and dust storms, especially the occurrence of more extreme wind events and the movement to drier climates, although reverse effects are possible;

9. *Recognizes* that sand and dust storms cause numerous human health problems in different regions around the world, especially in arid and semi-arid regions, and that there is a need to reinforce protective strategies to reduce negative impacts of sand and dust storms on human health, and invites the World Health Organization, with the cooperation of other relevant United Nations entities, as appropriate, to support affected countries in combating health problems caused by sand and dust storms, within their respective mandates;

10. *Commends* the commitment of the United Nations Environment Assembly to address sand and dust storms, and in this regard notes Environment Assembly resolution 2/21 on sand and dust storms, adopted during its second session;

11. *Notes* the convening of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi from 4 to 6 December 2017, under the theme "Towards a pollution-free planet", and affirms the importance of addressing sand and dust storms in the context of international efforts against air pollution;

12. *Welcomes* the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Ordos, China, from 6 to 16 September 2017, notes with appreciation the Ordos Declaration[6] and other relevant outcomes adopted by the parties during the Conference, namely decision 31/COP.13,[7] invites the organizations of the United Nation system to support their implementation, and reaffirms the importance of addressing sand and dust storms under the Convention;

[6] ICCD/COP(13)/21/Add.1, decision 27/COP.13, annex.
[7] See ICCD/COP(13)/21/Add.1.

13. *Notes* the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, held in Tehran from 3 to 5 July 2017, which resulted in the Ministerial Declaration and technical recommendations of the Conference;[5]

14. *Encourages* the relevant entities of the United Nations, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, and donors to provide capacity-building and technical assistance for combating sand and dust storms and to support the implementation of the national, regional and global action plans of the affected countries;

15. *Acknowledges* the global assessment of sand and dust storms, prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme in collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities, including the World Meteorological Organization and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which sets out proposals for consolidated and coordinated technical and policy options for responding to sand and dust storms;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-third session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", a sub-item entitled "Combating sand and dust storms" unless otherwise agreed.

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[5] See A/71/999.